

## HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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**Name** Axedale Tavern (formerly Axedale Hotel)  
**Address** 105 High Street AXEDALE **Grading** 2008 Local  
**Building Type** Inn/Tavern  
**Assessment by** Context Pty Ltd




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**Recommended Heritage Protection** VHR No HI No PS Yes

**Architectural Style** Victorian Period (1851-1901)

**Maker / Builder** Unknown

### Integrity

Good

## History and Historical Context

### History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye

The land around the former Shires of Strathfieldsaye and McIvor had a long history prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Jaara Jaara people are the original inhabitants of the area.

The area around Port Phillip was explored by Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor General of New South Wales, and a large party in 1836, on the homeward leg of a journey to Portland Bay. Impressed by what he perceived as the bounty of the land, Mitchell named the area *Australia Felix*.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Port Phillip district was opened up for settlement soon thereafter, and much of the land in the Western districts of Victoria, including the former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye, was subsequently dominated by a series of pastoral

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runs. Most of the area around the town of Axedale and the numerous small towns in its vicinity was licensed to David Jennings as part of the Campaspe Plains run. The run covered an area of more than 144,900 acres and was populated with an estimated 12,000 sheep. A portion of Campaspe Plains was licensed to A. Jennings and George Playne in 1840 and the 67,000 acre station became known as Axedale. In the coming decade the holders of the license changed a number of times. By the time the leasehold over the land was cancelled in 1865, the run had greatly reduced in size.[2]

Following the cancellation of leasehold, land holdings were of a smaller scale and pastoralists were gradually overtaken by farmers. The discovery of gold at Bendigo and the surrounding areas changed the face of the district and brought about new patterns of settlement and expansion. William John Bulling claimed to be the first man to discover gold at McIvor, and he was granted a £400 reward for the find. By 1853, over one hundred prospectors had assembled at Wild Duck Creek in the hopes of striking it rich. This number expanded the following year, and included some 2,000 Chinese immigrants.[3]

The Strathfieldsaye Road District was proclaimed in the Government Gazette on the 12th August 1861, and encompassed within it the parishes of Axedale, Strathfieldsaye, Eppalock, Mandurang, Sedgwick and Lyell.[4] The process of election of the board was punctuated by rivalries between Catholic and Protestant faiths, a characteristic of the district which infiltrates much of its history. Strathfieldsaye met the criterion prescribed to become a Shire in 1863, a transition that was officially proclaimed on the 17th September of that year.[5]

In 1864, Strathfieldsaye Shire was divided into three wards: Mandurang, Strathfieldsaye and Axedale.[6]

## History of Axedale

The plan of the township of Axedale, with its characteristic crescent ends, was laid out circa 1856. Axedale was included in the district of Mandurang and under the control of the Strathfieldsaye Roads Board. Patrick Drake had built the Campaspe Hotel in 1855, and by 1865, the district had developed to the extent that it was able to support a further six hotels.[7] Goldfields were typically rough and lawless places, and hotels were big business in their midst. Patterns of settlement continued to reflect the status of Axedale as a centre of support for surrounding farm lands and mining pursuits, and by the 1860s, there were some 500 residents.[8]

Axedale was proclaimed a district on the 20th August 1861, and then a Shire on the 25th September 1866.[9] Much of the population of Axedale was of Irish origin, and tensions between Catholics and Protestants were articulated through the establishment and development of separate facilities for both religions. Facilities in the town were established to cater for, or became associated with, either the Catholic or Protestant communities, so much so that Axedale duplicated its cemeteries, hotels and schools in order to cater for both sectors.[10]

Religious facilities were first established in Axedale with the opening of the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Axedale in 1862. The Catholics also ran a school from the Church, catering for the children of waves of settlers that continued to arrive in the area. By the end of the 1860s, pressure from the Common School Committee led to their acquisition of Crown Land, that was gazetted as the site for the Axedale Common School in 1869. The school opened in 1871.[11] Alongside the establishment of religious and educational facilities was the construction of the Axedale Police Station, which opened in 1866.

The rich soils of the Campaspe River allowed for the continuation of farming as a mainstay for the area. Alongside the maintenance of agricultural and pastoral pursuits, residents of Axedale developed other industries. Napthali Ingham established a bluestone quarry on his land in the 1860s, and a further quarry was opened in by Riley, Brazier and Nelson in 1905.[12] Vineyards and orchards were important developments in the district.

Development of the district and its industries were further enhanced with the construction of the railway from Bendigo to Heathcote, which opened in 1884. The railway was vital means of connecting a number of small towns in the district. The

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station at Axedale was opened on the 1st October 1888, and continued to be serviced until its closure during the Second World War.[13]

In the 1930s, construction of a weir at the Campaspe River was commenced, though work was suspended at the height of the depression.[14] Proximity to Lake Eppalock, constructed in 1960-65, also proved a source of employment for the town. [15]

The marked development of the region culminated in the decision in 1994 to amalgamate the Shire of Strathfieldsaye with nearby Shires to form the City of Greater Bendigo.

## History of former Axedale Hotel

A February 1858 plan of Axedale shows a small 'store' building on the corner of High Street and Raglan Place.[16] The Shire of Strathfieldsaye rate books record Patrick Drake as the owner of a hotel and dwelling in the township of Axedale from July 1864. A store is also listed separately. The exact date of construction of the hotel is not known, though it is assumed to have been built in the early 1860s, later enveloping the 1850s store, whose separate roof line is still visible. Drake's hotel was renamed the Campaspe Hotel by 1865 and Patrick Drake continued to run the place until the early 1890s.[17] It is possible that the former Axedale Hotel was originally called Drake's Hotel and the name later changed to the Campaspe Hotel. By 1895, Edward Drake had become the proprietor of the place, which by that stage was listed in rate books simply as 'hotel, Axedale'. By 1908, the license over the hotel had been passed to Edmond Drake, who ran the establishment until circa 1914.[18]

After the First World War, Edward and Mary Drake took over the hotel. They ran the place until circa 1930. At this time Mary and Cletus Drake were briefly recorded as the proprietors of the hotel. By 1934, Felix and Mary Drake held the license for the hotel. It stayed in the family until after the Second World War, when Ron McDonald took over the license for the hotel.[19]

[1] Randell, J. O. (1985). *McIvor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote, Shire of McIvor*, p. 1.

[2] Spreadborough, Robert and Anderson, Hugh (1983). *Victorian Squatters*, Red Rooster Press, Ascot Vale, p. 150.

[3] Spreadborough and Anderson (1983), p. 31.

[4] Hewat, Tim (1983), *Bridge Over Troubled Waters, A History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye, Shire of Strathfieldsaye, Victoria*, pp. 11 - 12.

[5] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 18.

[6] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 107.

[7] Whitworth, Robert P. (1879). *Bailliere's Victorian Gazeteer and Road Guide*, F. F. Bailliere, Melbourne, p. 17.

[8] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), *Accent on Axedale, Axedale*, Victoria, p. 8.

[9] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 21.

[10] Earth Tech Engineering Pty Ltd (2002), *Heathcote - Strathfieldsaye Thematic History*, City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo, p. 10.

[11] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 16.

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- [12] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 21.
- [13] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970) p. 28.
- [14] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 115.
- [15] Heritage Victoria, (n.d), *Eppalock Weir*, Hermes entry 6482
- [16] Put-away plan 'A98 - Allotments in the Township of Axedale', Feb. 12, 1858.
- [17] Shire of Strathfieldsaye Rate Books, 1864 - 1890.
- [18] Shire of Strathfieldsaye Rate Books, 1864 - 1890.
- [19] Shire of Strathfieldsaye Rate Books, 1864 - 1890.

## Primary sources

- Put-away plan 'A98 - Allotments in the Township of Axedale', Feb. 12, 1858.
- Shire of Strathfieldsaye Rate Books.
- Whitworth, Robert P. (1879). *Bailliere's Victorian Gazeteer and Road Guide*, F. F. Bailliere, Melbourne.

## Secondary sources

- Earth Tech Engineering Pty Ltd (2002), *Heathcote - Strathfieldsaye Thematic History*, City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo.
- Hewat, Tim (1983), *Bridge Over Troubled Waters, A History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye*, Shire of Strathfieldsaye, Victoria.
- Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), *Accent on Axedale*, Axedale, Victoria.
- Randell, J. O. (1985). *McIvor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of McIvor.
- Spreadborough, Robert and Anderson, Hugh (1983). *Victorian Squatters*, Red Rooster Press, Ascot Vale.
- Heritage Victoria, (n.d), *Eppalock Weir*, Hermes entry 6482

## Description

### Physical Description

The road into Axedale sweeps around a bend as it rises from the Campaspe River and 105 High Street is located at the entrance to the town opposite another hotel at 104 High Street. The Axedale Hotel appears to have been built in two parts as the later building possibly incorporated the 1850s store. The slightly raised roofline is likely to have been the store and the remainder of the building formed the extension when it became a hotel. The roof form is continuous with the

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verandah and there are timber verandah posts with bases and capital. A timber frieze runs the whole length of the verandah, including the return verandah. The frieze is of a design sometimes used in the 1850s. There is a complete row of double doors to the front elevation opening to the road, and a splay corner with another set of double doors as the main entry. The windows are half glazed with timber panelling beneath and multi-paned sashes above. The whole building is clad in weatherboard. There is a large outbuilding at the rear of the site which appears to be contemporary with the 1850-1870 period. This is two storey in height and clad in a variety of timber palings and weatherboards. The outbuilding is also of note. The Axedale Hotel is one of the most intact hotels of this period in the study area and is a key building in Axedale.

## Physical Condition

Good

## Conservation Policy

### Guidelines (Specific)

The following specific conservation actions are recommended, should the opportunity arise:

Removal of the neon sign would enhance this building.

## Comparative Analysis

There are a number of early hotels in the area including the Redesdale Hotel and the Knowsley Hotel. The Axedale Hotel is a particularly large and fine example of an early hotel.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The former Axedale Hotel including all the fabric of early Victorian circa 1860s timber building and incorporating parts of 1850s store is significant. The two storey outbuilding is also significant.

*How is it significant?*

The former Axedale Hotel is of local historic, social and aesthetic significance for the City of Greater Bendigo.

*Why is it significant?*

The former Axedale Hotel is largely intact and in good condition. It is historically significant for its long association with the Drake Family. Patrick Drake had built the Campaspe Hotel in Axedale in 1855, and is recorded as the owner of the former Axedale Hotel from 1864 until the early 1890s. The hotel stayed in the family until after the Second World War, demonstrating a strong commitment to family enterprise and tradition. *Criterion A*

The former Axedale Hotel is also socially significant as an ongoing part of Axedale's social life, now operating as the Axedale Tavern. *Criterion G*

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The former Axedale Hotel, complete with double doors that open directly onto the verandah, timber verandah posts and timber frieze is architecturally significant and forms an important streetscape element in Axedale. The building demonstrates two stages of development, encompassing both the 1850s store and 1860s hotel, which is visible in the different rooflines. It is one of the most intact hotels of this period in the City of Greater Bendigo. *Criterion E*

## Assessment Against Criteria

### HERCON CRITERIA

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion A*

Possession of uncommon rare or endangers aspects of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion B*

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion C*

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments. *Criterion D*

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics. *Criterion E*

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. *Criterion F*

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions. *Criterion G*

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history. *Criterion H*

## Recommendations 2008

**External Paint Controls**

Yes

**Internal Alteration Controls**

No

**Tree Controls**

No

**Fences & Outbuildings**

Yes

**Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted**

No

**Incorporated Plan**

Yes

**Aboriginal Heritage Place**

No

## Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the Axedale Tavern at 105 High Street, be retained as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the City of greater Bendigo Planning Scheme with the schedule entry as shown above. The extent of registration is the whole of the property as defined by the title boundaries. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the 'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'

